

Appln No. 09/692,746

Amdt date September 11, 2003

Reply to Office action of March 11, 2003

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

By this amendment, Applicant has amended the specification to reference copending applications containing related subject matter. Applicant has also canceled claims 16-18, and has amended claims 1 and 29. Accordingly, claims 1-15 and 19-51 are presently pending. Applicant respectfully requests reexamination, reconsideration and allowance of this application.

Applicant thanks the Examiner for his careful consideration of this application. Applicant has canceled claims 16-18 that inadvertently were added in the original application as substantial duplicates of claims 6-8. As claims 16-18 have been withdrawn, Applicant respectfully requests that the double patenting rejection be withdrawn.

The Examiner has objected to claims 6-8, 12, 14 and 16-18 based on certain informalities. Of the pending claims, Applicant has amended claims 2, 6-8, 12 and 14 to correct the informalities in light of the amendment to independent claim 1.

The Examiner has rejected claims 1-51 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Whitehouse, U.S. Patent 6,005,945 in view of Heiden, U.S. Patent 6,408,286. Applicant respectfully requests that the rejection be withdrawn.

In one embodiment of Applicants invention, a scalable system is disclosed that includes a plurality of cryptographic devices in which any one or more of the devices may be used to authenticate the digital signature applied to an advertisement on an envelope. As recited in claim 1, for example, the system includes "a plurality of cryptographic devices remote from the

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plurality of user terminals and coupled to the computer network, wherein the cryptographic devices include a computer executable code for verifying that the advertisement graphics is authorized to be printed next to the VBI, and wherein any one or more of the plurality of cryptographic devices may be used for verifying the advertising graphics." Independent claim 29, recites "verifying the digitally signed advertisement graphics using any of a plurality of cryptographic modules." Neither of the claimed limitations are disclosed or suggested in the cited references.

As stated by the Examiner, Whitehouse fails to teach a digitally signed advertisement graphics next to the value bearing indicia. In addition, the Whitehouse reference specifically teaches away from a distributed system including a plurality of cryptographic devices. According to Whitehouse, "[a] key aspect of the system is that all secure processing required for generating postal indicia is performed at secure central computers.... The secure central computer 102 at a central site contains all of the customer account information, current balances, a transaction log for each customer, details on each mail piece indicia dispensed, and encryption software and keys." See Whitehouse, Abstract; col. 6, lines 21-30; col. 9, lines 12-20, and FIG 4. Whitehouse, therefore, discloses a system including central computers dedicated to particular users based upon whether the central computer holds the information pertaining to that customer's account. It does not disclose a scalable system including a plurality of cryptodevices, any of

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which may be used to digitally sign advertising graphics, as set forth in the claims of the present invention.

The secondary reference cited by the Examiner, Heiden, also fails to account for the elements missing from the primary Whitehouse reference. Accordingly, neither Whitehouse nor Heiden, alone or in combination, discloses or suggests the claimed inventions as set forth in independent claims 1 and 29.

The remaining claims 2-15, 19-28 and 30-51 depend directly or indirectly on independent claims 1 and 29, and are therefore are also in condition for allowance.

Based on the foregoing, Applicant respectfully requests early issuance of a Notice of Allowance for claims 1-15 and 19-51.

Respectfully submitted,

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